



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
 REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR  
 REGION 5  
 77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD  
 CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

**JUN 23 2017**

East Chicago/Calumet Coalition  
 USS Lead Superfund Site  
 P.O. Box 2321  
 East Chicago, IN 46312

Dear Ms. Lopez, Ms. Daniels, Ms. Jimenez, and Ms. Adams:

Thank you for your April 13 and June 7, 2017, letters on behalf of the East Chicago / Calumet Coalition regarding the U.S. Smelter and Lead Refinery, Inc., Superfund Site in East Chicago, Indiana. Administrator Pruitt has asked me to respond on his behalf. In your April 13, 2017, letter, the CAG requested an "action plan" from EPA that responds to several requests in the letter. The CAG also noted that it has several remaining concerns about exposures to lead and arsenic and requested an update regarding EPA's evaluation of permanent relocation of residents.

EPA appreciates the Coalition's interest in the cleanup process at the USS Lead Site, and EPA is committed to enhancing communication with area residents. To that end, beginning June 24, EPA will hold monthly community meetings at the former Carrie Gosch Elementary School to provide updates on cleanup activities and hold question-and-answer sessions. Future meeting topics will be planned based on residents' input and questions received at prior meetings.

EPA also plans to solicit the community's input on any proposed revisions to the cleanup plan for the former West Calumet Housing Complex ("Zone 1") property. EPA is still evaluating a range of cleanup options for Zone 1, but EPA will promptly notify the Coalition and area residents of any community meetings at which EPA may discuss those options and receive questions and community input. As at every Superfund site, EPA will also accept formal public comments on proposed revisions to the Zone 1 cleanup plan, and EPA will consider those comments prior to making any final decision.


Additionally, EPA is preparing to conduct a groundwater investigation associated with Operable Unit 2 of the USS Lead Site. EPA appreciates it when residents bring their concerns, such as the issue of seepage or flooding in area basements, to EPA's attention so that those concerns can be evaluated as part of the OU2 investigation. EPA will keep the community informed on the progress of that investigation and will report sampling results on the USS Lead website as they are validated. Once the investigation is completed, EPA will provide a summary of its findings and solicit public comments on its proposed cleanup plan.

With regard to the pending revision to the ATSDR public health assessment for the USS Lead Site, EPA will incorporate ATSDR's findings, as appropriate, into future site cleanup decisions. However, the Agency maintains that it selected a protective soil cleanup remedy for the residential areas in the 2012 Record of Decision. The excavation of contaminated soil, the evaluation of indoor dust levels, the performance of required interior cleanings, and joint agency efforts to educate the community about reducing exposures to lead are reducing community health risks from site contaminants.

EPA is also working with the city and Indiana Department of Environmental Management as they actively address residents' concerns with drinking water quality. EPA continues to recommend that residents of East Chicago (and any other city where lead service lines are present) who are concerned about the potential for lead in their drinking water use lead-reducing tap water filters in their homes. Over the longer term, the city is working with the state to replace lead service lines, which should remove the primary source of lead in drinking water in area homes. However, I must note that the petition filed by the Natural Resources Defense Council for emergency action under the Safe Drinking Water Act is still being reviewed by EPA.

Again, thank you for your letters. I look forward to your continued participation and assistance as EPA progresses in its cleanup of the site. If you have further questions, please contact Janet Pope, the Region 5 community involvement coordinator for the USS Lead Site at 312-353-0628.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert A. Kaplan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Robert A. Kaplan  
Acting Regional Administrator